

# Do you know your basic tenant rights?

## Before agreeing to a Tenancy

- Calculate the anticipated costs and make sure they fit into your budget.
- Check the condition of the apartment.
- Put all agreements, including those for repairs in writing.
- Talk with neighbors and other tenants to find out as much as you can about the landlord.

## Security Deposit and Last Month's Rent

- You have a right to receive interest on your security deposit and last month's rent payment.
- Your landlord must tell you which bank is holding your deposit.
- You may pursue your landlord for triple damages if your deposit is not returned to you within 30 days after terminating the tenancy.

## Habitable Environment/Sanitary Code Protections

- Your landlord should provide water, heating, structural maintenance and snow removal at every exit.
- Your landlord must begin repairs 5 days after notice of a violation and must finish most of the work within 14 days.
- The Board of Health enforces the Sanitary Code; find your local Board by contacting your city or town hall.

## Rent Withholding

You may withhold a portion of your rent if:

- You have asked your landlord in writing to make necessary repairs; and
- Your local Board of Health has found a violation and notified your landlord; and
- You are current in your rent, not the cause of the problem, and the unsanitary conditions don't require you to move out to make repairs.

Remember, rent withholding is a serious step. Try to work out an agreement with your landlord before you begin to withhold rent.

## Splitting the Bill

- If you are sharing a lease with a roommate you may be responsible for the roommates share if the roommate neglects to pay. If you do not, your landlord may take you to court. You should request any disputed amount from your roommate. You may pursue them in small claims court to secure any amount you believe they owe you.

***Find out more information about your rights by calling the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation at 617-973-8787.***